

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) offered an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act to provide protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals who are victims of violent crime. To see video of his speech, [click here](#).

“Domestic violence can affect everyone, and everyone deserves to be protected,” said Rep. Quigley. “Field experts agree that current protections aren’t enough, and that we need to protect our LGBT community from violence. We have a responsibility to provide equal protection for all Americans, and my amendment will ensure that LGBT individuals receive the vital care they desperately need and absolutely deserve.”

Rep. Quigley’s legislation amends the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012 (H.R.4970), which establishes a new grant program for service providers engaged in outreach activities and administering services to “Underserved Populations.” Underserved populations are defined as those who face barriers to accessing needed services.



***PHOTO: Rep. Mike Quigley (right) calls on Congress to protect the LGBT community in any reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) during a press conference held by House Judiciary Committee Democrats earlier today.***

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According to a 2010 study, 96 percent of victim services and law enforcement agencies said they did not have specific services for LGBT victims. According to a 2011 survey, 85 percent of service providers working with LGBT victims of violence saw a victim turned away or denied services because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is landmark legislation that provides vital resources to prevent, investigate and prosecute domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Every bipartisan reauthorization since original passage in 1994 has been updated to cover additional groups of vulnerable individuals, including immigrants, senior victims, and victims with disabilities in 2000 and Native women in 2005.

Rep. Quigley also cosponsored two additional amendments aimed at protecting the LGBT community offered by Rep. Jerry Nadler (NY-28) and Rep. Jared Polis (CO-02).

A member of the Congressional Equality Caucus, Rep. Quigley has made LGBT equality one of his top [legislative priorities](#). Last year he [hosted a DOMA field forum](#) to investigate the impacts of the Defense of Marriage Act on individuals and families in Chicago and is a [co-sponsor of the Respect for Marriage Act](#), which would ensure that all couples are treated fairly under federal law. Rep. Quigley is a co-sponsor of the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act, which would provide benefits to domestic partners of Federal employees. As Cook County Commissioner, he passed the Domestic Partnership Benefits Ordinance, providing full benefits for domestic partners of county employees.

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